

Music in the Time of COVID-19 Oral History Project
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Maggie Molloy
Music Radio, Puget Sound and Beyond
Radio Host, Classical King FM 98.1

INTERVIEWEE: Maggie Molloy

INTERVIEWER: Constance Aguocha

SUBJECTS: Dave Beck, Ian McCutcheon, Ijeoma Oluo, Dr. Quinton Morris, experimental music, healing, emergency funds

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Constance Aguocha 00:00:18

Hey y'all, this is Constance Aguocha interviewing Maggie Molloy. It is currently 1:09pm on May 28, 2021. We are interviewing remotely. I'm currently stationed in Seattle, Washington. Maggie, are you also in Seattle right now?

Maggie Molloy 00:00:36

Yep.

Constance Aguocha 00:00:37

Awesome. And, I guess just to start out, if you could just share what it is that you do.

Maggie Molloy 00:00:44

I'm a radio host at Classical King Fm 98.1. I'm a weekend host. I curate and host a contemporary and experimental music show that airs on Saturday nights at 9pm, called *Second Inversion*. And then I also host, on Sundays, from 11am to 4pm, just straight ahead, classical music.

Constance Aguocha 00:01:07

Awesome, and could you just walk us through what a typical day looks like, pre COVID?

Maggie Molloy 00:01:16

Oh (*laugh*)—so, my job is kind of a combination of reviewing new releases of contemporary works. I curate the contemporary music library at King FM. So, I decide what types of pieces we want to keep, and what things we might play on the air and what things are not a good fit for our format. And then I—each week, I curate a show that highlights contemporary music. So, I put together an hour playlist of music, always around a different theme. So, I come up with a

different theme every week that could be—recently, well, this week's theme is music for healing. So, it's all music that's rooted in healing ceremonies or different—different ways that artists view music as a healing presence in their lives. Next week's theme is, *I Love New York*. It's all music that is from New York, or kind of traces cultural moments in New York City. We've also done themes such as folk music episodes, contemporary music that's inspired by folk traditions from around the world. We've done musical postcards, pieces that composers wrote home about, from different places that they traveled or different places that they're from. So that is—a fair amount of my work every week is around contemporary music and curating that show, and hosting it. And then, I also research and host straight ahead classical music every week, too. So, I guess there's not a—my typical day is a combination of listening, recording, editing, and producing.

Constance Aguocha 00:03:03

Awesome. And then—I guess, since a lot of your work happens from within the studio, and I guess in a way is kind of semi-remote on a typical type of basis, how do you feel that COVID has affected that day to day?

Maggie Molloy 00:03:22

The radio station is kind of an interesting microcosm of the pandemic, because there are some people at the station who can work from home full time, and that is the safest thing that they can do. So, they've been working from home, remotely, the entire year, basically. For me, I do kind of a combination of going into the station, and doing some work from home. So, Zoom meetings and that sort of thing I'll usually do at home, and then I'll go into the station to have access to the music library and have access to recording equipment, and all of that stuff editing equipment. Though, for me, that's—the pandemic has allowed a little bit more flexibility for me to have the option to work from home sometimes. But, then I do still need to go into the station most days. That has presented some unique challenges at the station with staggering people's work schedules, and also just upping the sanitation measures around the office to make sure that everybody's been safe this whole time. Wearing masks, sanitizing everything you touch, we have HVAC machines all over the office. So, we have a pretty small staff, but there have been a lot of extra measures taken this year to make sure that everybody's safe.

Constance Aguocha 00:04:35

With all those extra measures that you mentioned, and the fact that there's —kind of like an in and out of people working from home and working in the station, have you felt generally safe?

Maggie Molloy 00:04:48

Yeah, I felt very safe. Honestly, I have been really amazed at the leadership during this whole pandemic time at the station. Our CEO, Brenda Barnes, keeps really up to date on all of the COVID protocols. She's been in meetings every week with people from UW Medicine [University of Washington] and different places about workplace safety. So, yeah, the managers have, in particular, really set clear instructions and guidelines to make sure that everybody's safe, and they've been really open to any concerns people have, as well about coming in. One unique thing that I didn't—I didn't necessarily think about before there was a global pandemic is that being a nonprofit public radio station, we have to stay on the air, there's no option to just shut down for a couple of weeks or something [CONSTANCE: *(laugh)*], and it's important that the radio station is going twenty four/seven in case there is some type of catastrophic emergency in which everybody loses power and doesn't have access to the outside world. They could still tune in, and they wouldn't probably hear classical music in that [CONSTANCE: *(laugh)*]—moment, but we would have to transfer to you, right? To a different news station or something that has—can get people the information that they need to survive a catastrophic emergency. [CONSTANCE: *(laugh)*]

Constance Aguocha 00:06:10

I love that (*laugh*). Do you think—do you think the fact that you guys have to stay open, essentially, has added to that type of stress that was already present in the situation?

Maggie Molloy 00:06:22

(*Pause*) I think that, (*pause*) yeah, it's an interesting thing, because for some radio stations, like a news format, for instance, they're just like talking about COVID all day, every day. For us, I mean, for me, it's been definitely very present in all the HVAC (*laugh*) machines and all the sanitizing, and masks, and stuff. But, it's nice that in the world of classical music, like at the beginning of the pandemic, King FM kind of took—the programming leadership said, "People are not coming to King FM to hear more about COVID, so let's not talk about it." And so having it—I mean, there's—yeah, we found unique ways to connect the community through radio during this time, but we don't like to talk a lot about COVID on the air. So, it's kind of nice as an escape from this crazy reality. [CONSTANCE: (*laugh*)]

Constance Aguocha 00:07:18

I—I noticed that you mentioned how you guys limited talk about COVID, mostly due to listenership, and like, you know, just so they can have like, I guess a type of safe haven to come to, a refuge where it's not like—at this point, like we all know that we're living in COVID (*laugh*). They see it everywhere. Y'all see it everywhere. (*pause*) Do you feel like it created a positive environment for y'all, as the radio hosts, as the people working at Classical King FM, to avoid this COVID talk?

Maggie Molloy 00:07:50

Yeah, I think that it's been nice for me too. I feel grateful—especially in the early days of the pandemic, when things were especially scary, I felt glad to have something to focus on. And that I was glad that my work was—the specific work that I'm going into the office and doing everyday, like audio editing, and recording and stuff, that none of that had anything to do with COVID. So, I didn't just spiral into an anxious circle about [?Inaudible?]the world. So, that's nice. But, I think, like, behind the scenes, right, we're all still talking about COVID at the station, and we're all very present in the safety measures that are taking place at the station. But, I think that there was a sense of camaraderie that, like, this is an especially unique service that can keep people feeling connected, even when they were isolated at home. Not even seeing their friends at all. FaceTime, happy hour-ing or whatever (*laugh*)—having a—having some company on the radio and something that is just like a break from this chaos of the news. I think—we heard from a lot of listeners that that was really helpful and that—that it was just a nice escape sometimes.

Constance Aguocha 00:08:59

That's, you know, that's really good to hear. Because, like, when I think that I also tune into Classical King Fm. I play violin and I have to be up at U Dub [University of Washington] about twice a week to play with the symphony, and having that [Classical King FM] on, and (*laugh*) kind of like—because even being able to play any type of in person music takes you out of the COVID nightmare we've been living in and being able to tune into like Classical King FM and also not have to live in the COVID nightmare, it has honestly been incredibly helpful. (*pause*) Also, along with that, you mentioned that you do producing work. Is that just in the studio was also your own individual work?

Maggie Molloy 00:09:44

No, just producing the show in the studio. And yeah, making sure all the elements come together.

Constance Aguocha 00:09:53

How did you get into that? If you don't mind me asking.

Maggie Molloy 00:09:57

Into radio? [CONSTANCE: *(yep)*] I studied music and, and also journalism in college, at Seattle University. And—I—my—yeah, one time *(pause)* I was at *(laughs)*. Well, I had one of my music and spirituality classes, one of my courses that I had to take in my junior year, and we had a substitute teacher one day, and she—she turned out to be Dave Beck's partner, Dave back on King FM. And I had never met him. I mean, I knew who he was from listening to the radio, but when his wife was teaching this class, she asked us each about what we're interested in, and I said I was doing music journalism. I worked on a school newspaper at that time, I was the arts and entertainment editor. And she said, Oh, well, you should talk to my partner, Dave Beck. He works at King FM. So, she gave me his email address, and I just reached out and he was so kind and helpful. He offered to show me around the station, and I just went to King FM for a day and met everybody. And it turned out [that] the timing of that was that I was going to be doing a contemporary experimental music composition program that summer in Paris. I was studying abroad, and that was the same time that there were—that the *Second Inversion* project at King FM for contemporary music was getting started. So, he introduced me to the people who were running *Second Inversion* at that time, and then I ended up getting an internship there after I finished my composition program in Paris.

Constance Aguocha 00:11:31

That's so exciting. I love stories where everything just ends up coming together.

Maggie Molloy 00:11:36

[?Inaudible?] never, you know, sent him an email or had not been in class that day *(laughs)*, life could have gone in a very different direction *(pause)*. So yeah, I've worked now at King FM for just about six years full time, and before that I did an internship for one year. So, almost seven years total involvement.

Constance Aguocha 00:12:03

That's awesome. So, in these seven years, and I guess, with this past one year being the COVID year, what would you say have been the biggest challenges that you faced?

Maggie Molloy 00:12:17

Well, prior to this year, *Second Inversion*, as a project, looked a lot different. I was still managing it, but it was—it was a twenty four/seven online stream of music, and it wasn't a specifically curated show that aired on the main channel. And actually, the *Second Inversion* show, as a show that launched—it launched in February of last year. So, that meant that [the] second version had a bigger audience on King FM, it aired once a week, and it was a smaller format, but a lot more concentrated in terms of curation and storytelling, to try to make classical music accessible—contemporary classical music accessible to a wider audience. And that—the show launched early February of last year. We had, like, the listening party at The Rendezvous in Belltown at the beginning of February, like, had a party, everybody was there. And then *(laugh)*, weeks later everything was shutting down. And, so actually, this past year is like—this show has grown a lot, as I've grown with it, to shape what is in and what it—like what role it plays week to week in the King FM programming. I think that the show itself has grown a lot this year. I feel like I've grown a lot as a host, now having a regular time slot on the air. I've gotten a lot more training and practice every week doing hosting. So, I think that I've gained some new professional skills that are really helpful for me, and I'm grateful that I have like—had a chance to zero in on this project that I can stay focused on during the pandemic, and feel like I've seen some growth. Especially when I know so many other people working in the arts felt like this was just an enormous setback for them.

Constance Aguocha 00:14:01

Yes. Do you feel like this period of growth—do you feel like this would have been different had [it] not been during COVID?

Maggie Molloy 00:14:12

Yeah, I think that it would have been different because—especially in the early days of COVID—I really felt like work was the only thing that I—the only consistent thing in my life that I could really focus time and energy into. And so, I think prior to the pandemic, there were a lot more outside distractions, and also just a lot more hobbies that I did. Like, I played music in a band here in Seattle, that I used to go to band practice once or twice a week, we recorded an album together—I had all these other projects outside of work that I [CONSTANCE: Definitely] also did often, and then during the pandemic it was like, Well, now it's like, Work at home, work at home, work at home.

Constance Aguocha 00:14:54

So, do you still play with that band now?

Maggie Molloy 00:14:58

We're—we've just started talking about meeting back up for band practice again, because we actually recorded an entire album, just finished recording. And we're just like finishing the mixing and mastering process when the pandemic hits. And so, we actually haven't released the album, even though it's been ready for over a year, because we can't play any shows. And so, I've been in touch with the band and stuff, and we're all like, we all want to be able to play together again, but we're waiting to make sure everybody's all vaccinated and feels comfortable with it.

Constance Aguocha 00:15:30

Absolutely. Have you been able to get vaccinated?

Maggie Molloy 00:15:33

Uh-huh.

Constance Aguocha 00:15:33

Ok. And—oh, sorry, I cut you off (*laugh*). Go ahead.

Maggie Molloy 00:15:39

Oh no, I was just gonna say, I actually got vaccinated at UDub [University of Washington], because my roommate's mom is a nurse there. So, she helped tell us to, like, get on the waitlist for UDub [University of Washington] and everything. And so, we actually were able to get our vaccines in April, which was really fortunate.

Constance Aguocha 00:15:59

Ok. So, I guess you had to get your vaccine essentially when it opened up to the broader public. You weren't treated like an essential worker?

Maggie Molloy 00:16:08

Yeah. No, we've legally have to, like (*laugh*) go to work. And technically, I think the way that they describe it is like, technically public, like public radio is an essential service. But, we're not essential workers. And I understand, too, that—right, we have a small staff, and our building—we weren't seeing a ton of outside people. It's not like working at a grocery store, or a restaurant where you're coming into contact with tons of strangers every day. It was very much protected who could enter and exit the station (*laugh*). So yeah, technically, I got a vaccine, like, as soon as it was open to just anybody. What was that? That over the age of 16? Or?

Constance Aguocha 00:16:49

Uh- Huh. I think it was over the age of 16. I think they opened up like mid April, like April 15, around then.

Maggie Molloy 00:16:57

That was right. Yeah. Right around then.

Constance Aguocha 00:17:01

Yeah, I was wondering about that. Because, I guess again, it's how we all see what's considered essential work (*laugh*)—Do you feel that radio should be considered more of an essential work?

Maggie Molloy 00:17:20

I don't know. I—I really believe that the people who are coming into contact with the most strangers should be at the top of the list. So, I don't think that my—I think like, obviously, health care workers and people who work in grocery stores and things like that, I think should be above people like me who are going into a kind of confined office space. But, I also don't know that there is any really, completely fair way to distribute vaccines when you're trying to just do it as quickly as possible.

Constance Aguocha 00:17:52

Definitely. (*Pause*) And also, not to jump back too far backwards, but did you want to share the name of your band?

Maggie Molloy 00:18:04

Yeah, the band is called *Familiars*. It's not classical music related. It's kind of like 80's pop music.

Constance Aguocha 00:18:10

I love 80s pop (*laugh*).

Maggie Molloy 00:18:11

I play synthesizer, but I—so, I play—yeah, keyboards and synthesizers in the band. And Ian McCutcheon is the singer-songwriter-frontman for the band. So, he's been—yeah, we're kind of —discussing as a group, What's best to do with the album at this point?

Constance Aguocha 00:18:38

Like, I know that again—I guess for those who don't know, Washington has a live performance ban that's been—oh, gosh, it's been a good several months now, I think, since the better part of last year. So, I know that's affected y'all's ability to do live performances and to actually give concerts, but how do you feel COVID has affected the actual album rollout as well?

Maggie Molloy 00:19:06

Yeah, the album rollout. Well, we haven't released the album because we really wanted to wait to play shows with it. This is more of a—I mean, some of the band, like playing shows and stuff with the band, we made some money that was in the band fund for this. But, you know, it's kind of collective money. The rest of the album was really financed by the singer-songwriter, Ian. So, for him, he was saying, you know, ideally, when we release the album we have planned to like—well, when we were going to release the album in spring of last year, pre-COVID, the plan was to like have an album release show, maybe do like a regional little tour and stuff. And the goal was kind of, you know, one, to get the music out there, but also to help pay back some of the costs that Ian had to like, put forward to finance the album. And when—without having concerts, there's less, like, possibility to make that money back if you're just releasing it online and everybody streams it for free on Spotify (*laugh*).

Constance Aguocha 00:20:12

Yeah. Girl, I'm with you there (*laugh*). (*pause*) What was I gonna say? Yeah, okay. So, —again, I guess, with radio, you've been able to, essentially, keep your job and be able to work, like from the office and be able to kind to have that continual work, even though, I guess, like your band kind of had to take a step back with all of that view. For your bandmates, were they able to rely on any like, I guess, on the social safety nets that were in place for everyone else, like with unemployment and COVID pay and stuff like that?

Maggie Molloy 00:20:51

Yeah, fortunately, the others in the band also had jobs that have been mostly safe. I think that Ian might have been out of work for like, a couple of weeks, but he is a gardener. So, he was able to still do that as outdoor work. Plus, yeah, so yeah, mostly everybody's been okay, in terms of [inaudible] jobs. They still had jobs that they had before, like, either working remotely or having, you know, a semi safe work environment that they can go into. So we were fortunate in that regard.

Constance Aguocha 00:21:23

That's good to hear. Like, I know during this time—again there's certain types of musical work that aren't as concrete. I guess it's very common to be a gig worker in the musical work economy, and you just hear a lot of stories of people who are like—who couldn't really get unemployment and couldn't really get, like all of these like—again, the social safety nets that were available to some of the broader public, just because musical work tends to be a little more precarious, tends to be a little off the books. Do you think that this time period and COVID has kind of opened people's eyes more to that area? (*pause*) If that question makes any sense (*laugh*).

Maggie Molloy 00:22:18

Yeah, I—I don't know. I think that, because I know sort of what you're talking about in the sense that that work kind of does intersect with some of the stuff that we do at the radio station. For instance, we used to have a live show every Friday night. We're going to start that again in July or something when it's safe. But like, you know, this year, we had to put that on pause. Couldn't, like, have local musicians in [the] studio, couldn't have local—yeah, couldn't do interviews with people in [the] studio, couldn't have their live performances on the show and things like that, that help promote their concerts. So, that is a shame. And one thing we did do, kind of to circumvent that, was that over the past year, we've had weekly features, these kind of little modules of like two or three, two or three minutes that highlight local performing arts organizations. Online streaming concerts, so right, like what all these—like Seattle Symphony or Seattle, modern orchestra, or Seattle opera, you know, their online streaming offerings, we highlight in these little like, two or three minute segments that play throughout the week. So, we're still trying to showcase what musicians are doing on the radio, but it's just taking a new format in this pandemic streaming time. I think that one thing that happened at the very beginning of the pandemic, that I don't know all the details on and you guys might have already talked to the people involved in it, but Ijeoma Oluo and some others started an artist emergency relief fund that ended up helping to support a lot of local artists. And it kind of blew up right at the beginning of the pandemic. I'm not sure where that project is now, but I think, since the beginning, artists have been acutely aware (*laugh*) that this was, like, not good for the arts community and that—and that a lot of artists need support. I think that there have been a lot of creative solutions that have come up over this past year, but I don't know about how financially feasible or efficient those things have been. [CONSTANCE: Yea]

Constance Aguocha 00:24:26

Do you feel like, with the—I guess, like with weekly shout outs that you've been doing every week trying to—to, like, put some more—what's the word I'm looking for? But, to put some more like spotlight on some of the other industries that have also been hit by COVID, do you feel like these connections that y'all have been building, like these bridges that y'all have had to create with each other during this time, do you see them continuing post COVID?

Maggie Molloy 00:24:57

Yeah, I think as—I think of them, being a public radio station, there have always been those partnerships with different arts organizations in the community, and they've taken different shapes, I guess, over the years. I think that during this past year, it has forced some of those arts organizations maybe to consider the importance of King FM and getting out their message more now that they've had to kind of depend on it, instead of doing live concerts in their, you know, in Benaroya Hall [Seattle Symphony] for instance. So, another example of that is that during this time we've had Seattle Symphony broadcasts the first Friday of every month where we broadcast different concerts that they've done in the past, and some, I think that they've been able to do socially (*laugh*). And every week, on Saturday mornings, there's a Seattle Opera broadcast of a performance that they've done at Seattle opera. And so those ways—like those things, giving them space to do that on this network of, you know, radio networks that have already been established, I think has been helpful— to connect them and I think that those partnerships will all continue. We, actually— King FM is located at the Seattle Opera building, so.

Constance Aguocha 00:26:08

Oh nice, I didn't know that.

Maggie Molloy 00:26:11

Yeah. So, I think that, yeah, I think all these partnerships will continue. I hope that the work that we're doing to try to help with these organizations can continue after the pandemic is over, too.

Constance Aguocha 00:26:27

(*Pause*) And then, like with things continuing, I know for a lot of us during COVID, even right now, Zoom has had to be a prominent part (*laugh*) of our jobs, in schools. Zoom, Skype, any type of remote type of communication, do you see that having a greater part in your work as well?

Maggie Molloy 00:26:56

Yeah, I'm curious to see what effects this has. We have a pretty small staff at King FM, but we used to do all staff meetings in person. The interesting thing is that King FM just moved to the Seattle Opera building in February of 2020 (*laugh*). And so, we, like, literally got to the new building, like everybody unpacked their boxes, and then like two weeks later, it was like, Okay—[off camera noise] a lot of people are gonna be working from home, or, you know, extra schedules and stuff. So we haven't—yeah, I'm curious to see what the new normal will be once things are safe, that people, if—yeah, how they're going to reel things back in or if they were going to keep the Zoom format for meeting.

Constance Aguocha 00:27:46

Do you feel, especially since the vaccine rollout has already kind of started happening, and a lot of y'all have been able to get vaccinated, from what I understand, do you feel like Classical King FM is getting back to, kind of, I guess, more of a post-COVID type normal?

Maggie Molloy 00:28:07

Yeah, I think that it's an ongoing conversation, right? In all of the staff meetings that we have, it does seem like there are some—there's hope that, you know, later this year, maybe this fall, it'll be more—it'll look like a more normal office workspace. But, I think a lot of us, I can't speak for the leadership, obviously—but, I think a lot of us individually just feel like during the pandemic, it is, like—every time seeing—things seem like they might be getting better, then it's like, you get shut back down. Or like, I just, yea, —I'm worried about making any real plans or feeling like real plans are happening because it just seems like every time we've gotten our hopes up, they've been kind of crushed (*laugh*).

Constance Aguocha 00:28:31

I feel things (*laugh*)—it does feel (*laugh*) like every time you're like, "Hey, it looks like things are getting better." (*laugh*) and then it just. (*laugh*)

Maggie Molloy 00:29:02

Cautious optimism (*laugh*).

Constance Aguocha 00:29:05

That's, I like the phrase, it is kind of a cautious optimism. You want to think—like you want hope for the best, and you want to hope that everything's about to get back to these, like, quotes "normal". I'm not sure if anything's ever gonna be exactly, like, the same as it was. And honestly, it might be better that way. Do you think—like, are there changes that you've seen because of COVID that you would like to see continued?

Maggie Molloy 00:29:37

I think that (*pause*) the flexibility that (*pause*)— I think having more workplace flexibility has been really nice for me, personally. Having the option to go in a little later and do some work from home, or like, yeah, shift my schedule to fit certain appointments and things like that. I think that's been really convenient, and I hope that there's more of an emphasis on allowing people to be flexible with their work-life balance, and also like encouraging people to take better care of their mental health, and for that to be more of a valid thing that employers are concerned with, like the wellbeing of their staff. (*laugh*) Like, both the physical safety and also the emotional well being during a turbulent time.

Constance Aguocha 00:30:36

Absolutely. How do you feel like—I guess for you personally, and maybe even like, for, like the people you've been working around—how do you feel like your mental health has been affected during COVID?

Maggie Molloy 00:30:51

I've definitely felt a lot of anxiety and stress. I think there have been some ups and downs in the pandemic. Sometimes I felt I was really productive and— (*pause*) and focused, and then sometimes it's like, it just feels really sad and really stressful. Especially living in a densely populated area. A lot of the things with, you know—just like things that used to be relaxing, for a long time weren't relaxing anymore. Like, going on a long walk was just stressful, because you'd just be—end up crossing the street every five minutes (*laugh*). And then you go for a run, and you have to have your mask on, and it's super hard to breathe. And it's just, you know, a lot of the things that I used to do to— like— get my mind off of stress, weren't available to me. I couldn't go to band practice anymore, and I can practice at home, but I have a roommate, and my roommate is also always home because it's (*laugh*) COVID! So, it's like, I think that, yeah, I definitely noticed more anxiety and stress about—just, like, base level stress all the time, even just doing mundane, everyday tasks.

Constance Aguocha 00:32:02

Yeah, yeah, I definitely feel that as well. Gosh, it's crazy to think that's been like a year and a half of kind of living with that type of anxiety. And a year and a half of (*pause*) just kind of like the uncertainty of it all. Going with this—going with like the things that have happened this year, I'm sure like—as you know, like, spring, early summer of this year, with all of the social justice things going on, primarily, like the Black Lives Matters, protests and everything that went on—How do you feel like that has, I guess affected not just like your musical work, but like the landscape in where you've been working as well?

Maggie Molloy 00:32:56

Yeah, I think that's an interesting point. Because, in—classical music has historically been pretty rooted in racist—racism. And, what is—what I really enjoy about my job is that I can, since I curate the contemporary music—like the

contemporary music landscape is way more diverse than most of classical music history. Just because, now people do have more opportunities to participate fully in the classical tradition in what—and to expand it in whatever ways they want. So, for me, with *Second Inversion*, the show that I work on, it's always been an ongoing goal that like every week, we feature at least one composer of color, at least one woman composer, and also local artists. And, I think that the contemporary music sphere is enormous and huge and so diverse, and that's what I really get excited about. So, for me, this has been an ongoing goal. But, I do notice, like when all of the George Floyd—when the George Floyd murder happened, and all of the social justice marches and things around that, a lot of other arts organizations, and even King FM, too, obviously had to think more critically about what they're doing all the time to try to highlight the diversity of voices that actually participate in classical music. And so, to that end, I'm also on the diversity team at King FM and we've been—we have monthly meetings to talk, to evaluate the programming, and talk about where we can fit in—or where we are falling short of highlighting more artists of color and women artists. And so, that's been nice that we've been able to actually discover a lot more new composers, and integrate them into the overall fabric of King FM to make sure that it's showcasing a broader range of voices. But, I think there's still a lot more work to do, obviously, and it's an ongoing process. But, I have been glad that King FM is consistently prioritizing it and that it wasn't just like, Oh, let's, like, talk about this for like two meetings and then never talk about it again (*laugh*). The—I do think that's the issue at hand. Now it's, How are arts people integrating this [diversity of voices] into all of the work that they're doing and not siloing it up into an all women composers concert or like an all composers of color concert. Because that's—that can be helpful, but it's not the end goal.

Constance Aguocha 00:35:33

I'm—I'm glad you mentioned that. I was having a similar conversation this week with one of my friends, and I was like—during this time I saw a lot more, I guess, awareness of a lot of the underlying issues happening to BIPOC individuals that the broader public kind of gets to—not know as much about. And I feel like a lot of people's answer is being, like, "Oh, we'll have a day where we just feature like black people! We'll just feature this!", and it happens for like a day (*laugh*) and then never again. Which is, you know, ...something (*laugh*). So, I am—I'm glad to hear that Classical King FM has kind of taken a more longevity approach, and like—continuously incorporating this change and like, making sure to actively change the landscape, as opposed to just like a one time type conversation.

Maggie Molloy 00:36:38

Yeah. I think that a lot of arts organizations, I hope, are doing that as well, and we're all trying our best. But, one thing I'm really excited about at King FM, there have been some new staff hires that I think are really gonna help with all of that. There's a new show launching this June called *Unmute the Voices* with Dr. Quinton Morris, who is a really incredible musician and local arts advocate. And he's—he's actually the head of the music program at Seattle U, [Seattle University] my former teacher, but he's joined the staff, and he's—his show is like really just highlighting works from—well, just highlighting stories from people of color in classical music, growing up as a black violinist and the things that he has faced in his career, and where he sees things going, and people who can speak to their own experiences about it. So that we hold space for people to actually tell their own stories instead of just having, you know, us trying to do it.

Constance Aguocha 00:37:45

Yeah, I agree. It's been very good to have more of the intersections that exist in classical music highlighted. Like being a woman in music, and being a black person in music, or being like—an intersection of LGBTQ and a POC in music. It's just been good to see that kind of stuff highlighted. Do you, I guess along with that, do you feel like you being a woman in music, a woman in radio has—had, I guess, an additional effect to how this year has gone for you? Like, along with the, just broader COVID nightmare we've all been living in? Do you feel like being a woman also added on to your experience?

Maggie Molloy 00:38:39

Yeah, I think so. I feel really glad that the leadership at King FM has so many, really just smart and talented women who are leading the charge. Really, the station's, like, leadership is just run by women. But, one crazy thing is, right now, I'm the only female host on, like, on staff at King FM. Which, it seems surprising, because, I mean, there's several men. Lots. And I am still young and still have a lot to learn, but one thing that I think is really nice, Brenda has started planning for a kind of—an—sort of a program that is going to be helping to train and create resources for aspiring announcers, so that they can start, you know, really helping people learn and grow in this avenue, who are interested in it. So that, hopefully, the landscape of classical announcers will become more diverse, instead of—Yeah, I don't know. I think that's an interesting question that I talk about a lot with women composers, because that's always been something I've researched a lot about, and think about a lot in my work. And the same could be said for BIPOC composers to—like we think about music, as an art form, having to be like a time based art form that is really, like, demanding people's attention for a certain amount of time, It's really pretty radical to be like a woman or BIPOC person demanding that time and space, which is so unnatural (*laugh*) for a lot of women or who, you know—a lot of people who have been trained that they don't deserve to take up that much space. And I think I, yeah, this has all been a big exercise in confidence building for me to say, like, I don't know everything, obviously, I'm still learning a lot about classical music announcing and a lot about classical music, but I have learned some things. And I think the stories I have to tell are interesting and funny, and like FM is giving me the space to do it. And I'm going to—I'm going to take that space and run with it (*laugh*).

Constance Aguocha 00:40:55

Yes, ma'am. I love that (*laugh*). That's—that's such a true comment. The idea of taking up space. I love how you worded that, because as—like, as women or as like—as BIPOC people, the idea of taking up space and taking up time, and, like, asserting ourselves in that way, is—is almost like a taboo in the societal—in the society that we live in. So I'm, I'm glad that you mentioned that, it's such an important thing. And I guess that's, like, I guess the good thing— it's crazy to see, like, a good thing that came from COVID (*laugh*)—but, I guess—I guess one good thing that's come from COVID is kind of like—it seems like more of an awareness and like social consciousness—and these things have been happening around us. Yeah, I'm not sure where I was going with that statement, but like, I'm glad that we brought this up.

Maggie Molloy 00:42:01

I hope that people hold on to these things and keep thinking about them, and putting them in front of mind. I feel like we all—I feel like in Seattle, especially, I think that people want to do better. Like, there's a real desire to do better and to be more inclusive, and I hope that this is going to continue onward.

Constance Aguocha 00:42:23

Absolutely, absolutely (*pause*). What has, if anything, what has, surprised you during this time?

Maggie Molloy 00:42:42

(*Pause*) Just in my work, or in the arts, in general, or?

Constance Aguocha 00:42:58

I guess, like, I guess all of the above (*laugh*)?

Maggie Molloy 00:43:08

I think I—well, one thing I've been surprised at—[is] just how much everybody at King FM has really risen to the occasion to try to stay calm and sane, and do work, and feel like the work is important. Like, I don't know, I think at the beginning I was kind of like, "You know, is classical music as important as everything else that's going on right now?" And I think that it does have a place in people's lives, and it is important. And it's felt really surprising and exciting to hear

from some of the audience members who did—who have written really emotional things to the station and said, like, you know, "I don't—I have been alone for months now, haven't been able to see any of my friends, I live alone, and like having some company on the radio and stuff has just made all the difference in my life." And those are the things that really touched me to think that, like, in such a scary time that this could be worthwhile to people. That it's something that plays a role in their life. That was surprising and encouraging to me.

Constance Aguocha 00:44:18

I love your insight. I feel like whenever you talk about what you do you, just you really feel the—the joy and conviction for what you do comes through. And I just— it's very heartwarming to feel.

Maggie Molloy 00:44:33

Aw, thank you.

Constance Aguocha 00:44:36

And (*pause*), I guess if there's anything else we haven't touched upon, is there anything that you would just love to share?

Maggie Molloy 00:44:44

(*Pause*) Yeah, I think that the pandemic has bonded the people at the station who are still there, like, day to day in a—kind of a unique weird way that I feel like we're always going to be connected on this (*laugh*)—on this level now. Like, this crazy thing that we went through together, and just, I think, yeah, showing up every day at the office during a crazy time, and it's just been kind of a symbol of, like—community and teamwork has been surprisingly meaningful, being able to connect with people like this. And, something else that, like, just in the course of this past year, doing more on-air hosting, I've heard from just people like—I mean, my grandparents listened in, you know, St. Louis, and like, they're 90 years old, I haven't been able to see them since before the pandemic, because it's just not safe. So, that's been so cool to stay connected in a weird way. I've heard from people who I went to elementary school with, or, like, old neighbors and things who are like, "Oh, I didn't know you're on the radio, I just heard you!" And like, my landlord, and things, and—and it's kind of exciting. It's an exciting microcosm of the community, especially at a time when people are thinking about community a lot differently in this digital COVID world. To know that there are people listening in all these different places at the same time, going about their lives at different places in the pandemic—and connecting with the music at the same time felt pretty special. So, [*it*] might be a little bit corny, but that is really crazy that it can keep everybody feeling connected in a disconnected time.

Constance Aguocha 00:46:24

I love a good, little corny thing anyways. It sounds (*laugh*)—honestly, I feel like that was, like, just the perfect way to tie together everything we've discussed today, and if you don't have anything else to share, I'm going to go ahead and stop the recording, but I just have some post interview things for you.

Maggie Molloy 00:46:46

Okay.